

# Israel News Desk

With BPF Secretary  
Steve Lloyd  
November 2021

It is with great sadness that I have to start this newsletter with the announcement that the Founder of the 'Israel Newsdesk', David Hoyle, passed away suddenly on October 27<sup>th</sup>. A service of remembrance was held at Starbeck Mission, Harrogate on Friday, 12<sup>th</sup> November 2021. David was a Godly man of great character, held in high regard, with many friends, not only in the UK, but in Israel and the Philippines. He leaves behind his wife Agnes and four children and grandchildren. Our thoughts and prayers are with Agnes and the family at this time. BUT... we also rejoice in the fact that David is now with his Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

**COP26** - Well, you just could not make this up. With all the worrying over the climate change disaster that was on the horizon, someone forgot to provide access to the venue for those who are disabled. An Israeli minister, Ms Karine Elharrar, a member of the Knesset and Minister for energy and water, who is wheelchair dependent, was unable to access the COP26 venue, stating it was like "Mission Impossible" to get in.

Ms Elharrar was being driven to Glasgow from Edinburgh and about 1 mile from the venue, security had blocked the road and would not let her car through. She was told she had two options, she could either walk or go on a shuttle but the route was not suitable for a wheelchair and there was no disabled access for the shuttle. Even Israeli PM Naftali Bennett remonstrated with the security guards for 2 hours without success.

In the end she had to return to her hotel in Edinburgh. She tried again the following day, this time succeeding. Ms Elharrar suffers from muscular dystrophy and was still fuming over the incident days later. She stated that she did not get an apology from the Scottish Government or the security firm, she did eventually get an apology from Boris Johnson who described the incident as 'shameful'.

Also at the conference, Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett said that Israeli technology could help save the planet. Israel is a country a third of the size of Scotland with a small carbon footprint and he cited his Government's 100 step plan, phasing out coal by 2025, cutting green-house gas emissions to net zero by 2050 and other policies. He also stated that Israel was good at adaptation, and that Israeli energy and brain power of their people was their most valuable resource.

**UK** - Israel's Ambassador to the UK, Ms Tzipi Hotovely, has vowed to 'carry on as normal' following a brutal attempt to attack her on Tuesday, 9<sup>th</sup> November at the London School of Economics. She was evacuated from the LSE as students and other pro-Palestinian activists tried to attack her following a speaking engagement. She stated that she was fine but concerned a bit at what they had done. She also stated "We will not give in to bullying and violence, the state of Israel will send its representatives to every platform"

Ms Hotovely spoke to 200 student for an hour and a half who wanted to hear Israel's story in one of the leading universities in the world.

In response to the incident, a representative of the LSE said that "the university rejects intimidation or threats of violence, and said that students involved in threats of violence would be disciplined. Free speech and freedom of expression underpins everything we do at LSE".

**Ethiopia** - Israel's Interior Minister Ayelet Shaked and Aliya and Integration Minister Pnina Tamano-Shata agreed earlier this month to fast-track the immigration of 5000 members of Ethiopia's community of Jewish descendants, due to the deteriorating civil war in the country.

The ministers stated that they had been following the unfolding events in Ethiopia with concern, and are acting to expedite the immigration of those waiting to come to Israel who have first-degree relatives in Israel and who are therefore eligible to immigrate to Israel.

Whether or not there is an immediate danger to the communities of Jewish descendants, mostly in Addis Ababa and Gondar, is unclear.

**USA** - A watercolour painting entitled "Wheatstacks" painted by Vincent Van Gogh in 1888 and stolen by the Nazis from its Jewish owner during the Holocaust has been sold at auction in New York for a staggering £26.7 million. The largest ever sum paid for a Van Gogh painting on paper at auction. The painting had been purchased by Max Meirowsky, a German Jewish art collector in 1913. When Meirowsky left Germany for Amsterdam in the face of growing antisemitism in 1938, he left the painting with an art dealer who sold it to Alexandrine de Rothschild of the banking family. When Rothschild left Germany for Switzerland, her art collection was seized by the Nazis. Its whereabouts had been unknown from the end of the second world war and through 1970's. But in 1979 it was purchased at a New York Gallery by Ed Cox.

The proceeds will be split between Cox's estate and the descendants of Meirowsky and Rothschild.

**Romania** - A Romanian Senate has adopted a law that makes it mandatory for all high schools and vocational schools in the country to teach a specific subject on the history of the Holocaust and the Jewish people. The law was passed earlier this month and the course will be taught starting in 2023. Its contents will be decided by the country's education ministry in collaboration with the Elie Wiesel Institute for the study of the Holocaust in Romania.

In the words of Jewish lawmaker Silviu Vexler, who championed the law, the initiative aims at "countering intolerance and extremism" among youth.

**China** - Just over 2 months before Israel and China celebrate 30 years of full diplomatic ties, the presidents of the two countries, Isaac Herzog and Xi Jinping, engaged in a lengthy telephone conversation on 17<sup>th</sup> November. It was the first presidential, bilateral telephone conversation between the two countries.

On January 24<sup>th</sup> 1992, then-foreign minister David Levy, during a four day visit to China, signed an agreement for the establishment of diplomatic relations with his Chinese counterpart, Qian Qichen.

**Poland** - Jewish American historian Eliyana Adler has refused to accept an award worth \$19,000 from the Polish government's Pilecki Institute, arguing that it suppresses work by "historians who strive to show the complex and indeed tragic aspects of Poland's wartime past".

Adler, an associate professor at Penn State University was given the award for her 2020 book 'Survival on the margins: Polish Jewish Refugees in the Wartime Soviet Union'. The honour was to be jointly awarded by the Auschwitz memorial museum.

Please continue to pray for the Nation of Israel, they are still the Apple of Gods eye and He still has a plan for them, pray for those making Aliya, and the men and women of the Israeli Defence Forces who are on constant alert against the enemies of Israel.

God bless you

Steve

'Maranatha'